United Nations E/C.12/2018/SR.29

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Sixty-fourth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 29th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 24 September 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Bras Gomes

Contents

Opening of the session

Adoption of the agenda

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

GE.18-15923 (E) 250918 260918

1815923

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the sixty-fourth session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. **Ms. Hicks** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that she wished to convey to the Committee the greetings of the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.

3. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had begun to implement its Management Plan for 2018–2021. The Plan contained a strong commitment to elevating economic, social and cultural rights and a special focus on two related results areas, namely housing and land rights, and the right to health. The Office intended to work closely with the Committee in those areas and would provide support in the Committee's drafting of its general comment on economic, social and cultural rights and land in 2019. Guidance on that issue was in high demand from colleagues in the field.

4. In the area of health, following the recommendations of the High-level Working Group on the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents, the Office had signed a Framework for Cooperation with the World Health Organization at the end of 2017. Under that Framework, the two entities would hold a joint meeting with a number of treaty body members in Geneva in November 2018.

5. One of the core priorities of the Management Plan was the integration of human rights into sustainable development. In that context, the Office welcomed the Committee's engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals and its inclusion of them in its questions and recommendations to States parties.

6. At the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, many of the voluntary national reviews had made reference to the human rights mechanisms. Some Member States had urged that human rights and development should remain separate and be addressed in Geneva and New York respectively.

7. The theme of the 2019 high-level political forum would be "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The forum, which provided an opportunity to highlight the interlinkages between development and human rights, would focus on the progress made in relation to Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 16, as well as 4, 8, 13 and 17, all of which overlapped with economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee was in a position to play a proactive role in the global accountability processes with respect to the implementation of the Goals. It might perhaps consider preparing a short authoritative text on the "leave no one behind" principle in connection with economic, social and cultural rights and the 2030 Agenda.

8. The Office was seeking to enhance the promotion and protection of civic space and would welcome recommendations from the Committee in that regard. It welcomed the statement on human rights defenders that the Committee had released in 2016 and was looking to engage further on the issue, including in the context of a high-level plenary meeting convened following the adoption of a General Assembly resolution on human rights defenders. The meeting, to be held in December 2018, would be sponsored by the Secretary-General.

9. The Office was also aiming to improve its work on prevention and to expand the global constituency for human rights. The annual reports of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council had benefited greatly from the Committee's normative guidance and recommendations. The work of the Committee would be highlighted at an intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda. While some stakeholders tended to equate the Sustainable Development Goals with economic, social and cultural rights, the Office was committed to ensuring that human rights were at the core of implementation of the Goals.

10. At its sixty-fourth session, the Committee would examine the reports of six States parties, including the initial reports of Cabo Verde, Mali and South Africa. Its scheduled

meeting with the European Committee of Social Rights was a welcome development in the context of increased cooperation with regional mechanisms. The Committee would hold a day of general discussion on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications and other provisions of article 15 on the relationship between science and economic, social and cultural rights. Scientific and technological advances brought with them both unprecedented opportunities and potentially serious human rights challenges, including the digital divide in access to technology.

11. The thirtieth meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies had focused on, inter alia, preparations for the 2020 review of the treaty body system. The Chairs had met with a broad range of stakeholders and with the Secretary-General, who had expressed his strong support for treaty bodies. They had also agreed to propose the appointment of focal points in each treaty body to contribute to a common position ahead of the review.

Adoption of the agenda

12. *The agenda was adopted.*

13. **Mr. Sadi** said that he would be interested to hear his fellow members' views on whether the Committee ought to pronounce upon world events that occurred in intersessional periods.

14. **The Chair** said that the question was an interesting one that the Committee would discuss further during the current session.

The public part of the meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.